

# NUTRITION

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## Frequently Asked Dietary Guidelines Questions

### What are the *Dietary Guidelines*?

The *Dietary Guidelines* are the cornerstone of federal nutrition policy and education. They are based on what experts have determined to be the best scientific knowledge about diet, physical activity and other issues related to what we should eat and how much physical activity we need.

The *Dietary Guidelines* answer the questions, "What should Americans eat, how should we prepare our food to keep it safe and wholesome, and how should we be active to be healthy?" The *Dietary Guidelines* are designed to help Americans choose diets that will meet nutrient requirements, promote health, support active lives and reduce risks of chronic disease.

### Why are the *Dietary Guidelines* important?

The *Dietary Guidelines* will help Americans make smart choices about food and physical activity, so they can have healthier lives.

The *Dietary Guidelines* allow government to speak with one voice to the public when presenting advice about proper dietary habits for healthy Americans ages two years of age and older and how to make food and physical activity choices to promote health and prevent chronic disease. All federal dietary guidance for the public is required to be consistent with the *Dietary Guidelines*.

The *Dietary Guidelines* provide the foundation for food and nutrition policy and the government's position for debating standards and international reports. The *Dietary Guidelines* influence the direction of government nutrition programs, including research, labeling, and nutrition promotion. This includes the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Guidance System – what's now known as the Food Guide Pyramid – which is being updated to reflect the new *Dietary Guidelines*.

Federal nutrition assistance programs such as USDA's School Meal and Food Stamp Programs, and the WIC Program (Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children) use the principles in the *Dietary Guidelines* as the scientific underpinning for designing benefit structures and nutrition education programs.

Prevention Partners recommends readers visit Healthier US website at [www.healthierus.gov](http://www.healthierus.gov) to learn more about dietary guidelines and the role it plays in managing your health.

